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PT08977

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D), B7(C)PAGE 01 BUENOS 03904 01 OF 03 141640Z
ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	INL-00	PERC-00	DS-00	EUR-00	OIGO-00
	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01	VCE-00	AC-01	DCP-01
	NSAE-00	DHS-00	ACE-00	SCT-00	SSO-00	SS-00	ASDS-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/005W	

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O 141637Z NOV 02

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8919
INFO FBI WASHDC PRIORITY
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BUENOS AIRES 003904

STATE FOR WHA/FO, WHA/BSC, S/CT
NSC FOR AMB MAISTO AND JOANNA WALLACE
FBI FOR WASHDC HDQRS -
DOJ FOR OIA/MICHAEL BURKE

B7(C)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/05/2012
TAGS: PGOV, PTER, PREL, AR
SUBJECT: PROGRESS IN AMIA BOMBING INVESTIGATION: JUDGE
REQUESTS FURTHER USG COOPERATION WHILE MFA ADVISES CAUTION

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PAGE 02 BUENOS 03904 01 OF 03 141640Z
CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR JAMES D. WALSH. REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS MADE IN RECENT MONTHS ON THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE 1994 AMIA JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER BOMBING. VARIOUS GOA OFFICIALS HAVE TO RAISED THE CASE WITH THE EMBASSY RECENTLY.

-- THE INVESTIGATING JUDGE HAS PUT TOGETHER A CASE THAT IMPLICATES A NUMBER OF IRANIAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS AND IS PREPARED TO ISSUE ARREST WARRANTS FOR SOME OF THE INDIVIDUALS. HE APPROACHED THE EMBASSY ON OCTOBER 24 TO REQUEST USG ASSISTANCE.

-- SENIOR MFA OFFICIALS MET WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON NOVEMBER 1 TO REPORT EFFORTS IN THE JUDICIARY AND INTELLIGENCE

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DIRECTORATE TO CONCLUDE THIS INVESTIGATION QUICKLY. THEY URGED MOVING FORWARD ONLY WITH A WATERTIGHT CASE. MEANWHILE DETAILS OF SOME OF THE INVESTIGATIVE ADVANCES HAVE BEEN LEAKED TO THE PRESS.

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EMBASSY RECOMMENDS USG AGREEMENT TO COOPERATE FURTHER WITH JUDGE GALEANO ALONG THE LINES OF WHAT THE USG HAS NOW DONE ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS IN RECENT YEARS. CLOSE DIALOGUE SHOULD ALSO BE MAINTAINED WITH BOTH THE MFA AND SIDE ON THIS COOPERATION. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) THE GOA JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE JULY 1994 BOMBING OF THE AMIA JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER HAS MADE PROGRESS
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OVER THE PAST YEAR, BASED ON CAREFUL FOLLOW-UP OF VARIOUS LEADS IN THE CASE. THIS INVESTIGATION HAS MOVED FORWARD IN PARALLEL TO THE TRIAL OF TWENTY-ODD ACCOMPLICES TO THE BOMBING, WHICH BEGAN IN SEPTEMBER 2001, JUST DAYS AFTER THE SEPTEMBER 11 TERRORIST ATTACKS IN THE U.S. THE FOCUS ON THE GLOBAL BATTLE AGAINST TERRORISM HAS IRONICALLY TAKEN MUCH OF THE ANTICIPATED INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE AMIA TRIAL AND INVESTIGATION. ANTICIPATING SOME OF THE JUDICIAL ADVANCES, THE LOCAL PRESS IN RECENT WEEKS HAS REPORTED THAT THE GOA IS PREPARED TO REQUEST THE EXTRADITION FROM LEBANON AND IRAN OF A NUMBER OF HIZBOLLAH AND IRANIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE 1994 BOMBING. THE PRESS HAS REPORTED THAT SHEIKH HASSA NASRALLAH, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF HEZBOLLAH, WILL BE ONE OF THOSE WHOSE EXTRADITION WILL BE REQUESTED BY THE GOA.

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GOA APPROACHES TO EMBASSY - THE JUDGE

3. (C) THESE PRESS LEAKS APPARENTLY HAVE SERVED TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE INVESTIGATING JUDGE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH HIS INVESTIGATION. FEDERAL JUDGE JUAN JOSE GALEANO, THE INVESTIGATING JUDGE IN THE AMIA BOMBING CASE, HAS DEVELOPED WHAT HE CLAIMS IS A STRONG CASE BASED ON STRONG CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE PROVING THE INVOLVEMENT IN THE BOMBING OF KEY IRANIAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS. IN AN OCTOBER 24 MEETING WITH LEGATT AND POLCOUNS, GALEANO SAID THAT HE

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EXPECTS TO BE ABLE TO ISSUE A JUDICIAL RESOLUTION AND ARREST
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WARRANTS BY DECEMBER 2002 FOR A NUMBER OF IRANIAN GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS WHO WORKED AT THE TIME OF THE BOMBING AT THE
IRANIAN EMBASSIES IN BUENOS AIRES AND SANTIAGO, CHILE.
EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT THE JUDGE'S DRAFT RESOLUTION AND THE
ARREST WARRANTS ARE BASED ON A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF NEW
INFORMATION, [REDACTED]

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4. (C) GALEANO REQUESTED CLOSE COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE
JUDGE AND USG OFFICIALS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE 1994 CASE IN
ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE RESOLUTION AND ARREST WARRANTS
PRESENTED ARE AS STRONG AS POSSIBLE. USG HAS COOPERATED
REGULARLY WITH GALEANO AND HIS INVESTIGATION, INCLUDING BY
SENDING ONE INTER-AGENCY TEAM AND ONE FBI TEAM IN RECENT
YEARS TO REVIEW HIS INVESTIGATION AND TO SUGGEST ADDITIONAL
INVESTIGATORY LEADS. THE LAST VISIT OF THIS SORT TOOK PLACE
IN MAY 2001 AND WAS JUDGED TO BE OF CONSIDERABLE UTILITY IN
THE INVESTIGATION.

[REDACTED]
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O 141637Z NOV 02
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BUENOS AIRES 003904

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INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

8. (C) IN THE PAST EIGHT YEARS OF INVESTIGATION, THERE HAS BEEN ONLY LIMITED INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION BETWEEN SIDE AND THE INVESTIGATING JUDGE, AND WITH OTHER INVOLVED OFFICES, INCLUDING THE FEDERAL POLICE. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT THE INVESTIGATIVE FOCUS OF GALEANO DIFFERS FROM THAT OF SIDE, MAKING COORDINATION BETWEEN THE TWO ESSENTIAL. IN RECENT WEEKS, WITH JUDGE GALEANO AND SIDE BOTH ACTIVELY MOVING FORWARD ON THE INVESTIGATION, EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES HAVE ENCOURAGED BOTH TO MEET AND COORDINATE CLOSELY THEIR WORK

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BEFORE ANY FURTHER ACTION OR ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE TAKEN ON THE
CASE. THE MFA, AS REFLECTED IN COMMENTS MADE DURING THE

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NOVEMBER 1 MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR, IS WELL AWARE OF THIS
FACT. AMBASSADOR HUERGO HAS HIMSELF TRIED TO FACILITATE SUCH
COORDINATION, RECENTLY GETTING TOMA AND GALEANO TOGETHER FOR
A JOINT MEETING. THE EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO STRESS THE
IMPORTANCE OF SUCH COORDINATION AND THAT THE INVESTIGATION
AND STEPS TO BRING THOSE RESPONSIBLE TO TRIAL SHOULD BE
INDEPENDENT OF POLITICAL PRESSURES AND ARTIFICIAL TIME
CONSTRAINTS.

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ACTION RECOMMENDATION

9. (C) EMBASSY ENDORSES A POSITIVE AND QUICK RESPONSE TO JUDGE GALEANO'S REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN REVIEWING HIS EVIDENCE AND HIS PLANNED JUDICIAL PRESENTATION AND ARREST WARRANTS. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF COOPERATION AT THIS POINT WOULD BE AN EARLY VISIT BY JUDGE GALEANO TO WASHINGTON FOR MEETINGS WITH USG EXPERTS AND INVESTIGATORS ON THE 1994 BOMBING. SUCH TRAVEL BY GALEANO IN THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS WOULD BE THE FASTEST MANNER IN MOVING FORWARD WITH THIS COOPERATION. AN ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE A REPEAT VISIT TO ARGENTINA BY A SMALL GROUP OF THE U.S. INVESTIGATORS WHO HAVE WORKED ON THIS CASE IN RECENT YEARS, THOUGHT THE TIME REQUIRED TO ORGANIZE SUCH A VISIT WOULD COMPLICATE THIS ALTERNATIVE. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT AT THIS POINT, WITH THE INVESTIGATING JUDGE AND SIDE REPORTEDLY MUCH CLOSER TO IDENTIFYING THE PERSONS ALLEGEDLY DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BOMBING, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE USG COOPERATE IN ANY POSSIBLE WAY. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS AN EARLY RESPONSE TO GALEANO'S REQUEST.

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